

A Few Suggestions to Help Cope with Anxiety

Anxiety increases the more we focus on it.

“What you resist persists.” - Carl Jung

The Unknown is Sometimes Scary

Think of how often people talk about the weather that’s coming tomorrow. The BIG storm, the dangerous conditions. There is a difference between being prepared and being frightened. Remind yourself that you have plowed out before, gotten home safely before, that you have plenty of toilet paper on hand. Resist the urge to search the weather app repeatedly. Remind yourself that, “We’ll be okay.”

Being Anxious is Okay...Temporarily

We all experience feelings all the time. We notice the feelings and accept them as part of our daily lives. Accept anxiety as a part of human experience. When waves anxiety show up, notice and describe the experience to yourself or others without judgment. Resist the urge to escape or calm your fears by obsessively seeking updates of what makes you anxious. Paradoxically, facing anxiety in the moment will lead to less anxiety over time.

Remind Yourself of the WHY of Your Life

We all have a purpose and a reason to get up every day. Whether it’s our children, our loved ones, our faith, we sometimes need to remind ourselves of our greater purpose.

Don’t Underestimate Your Strength and Resiliency

Research shows that people tend to overestimate how badly they’ll be affected by negative events and underestimate how well they’ll cope with and adjust to difficult situations. Identify your strengths!

Resist the “Did You Hear What They Said...” Loop.

We put on seatbelts, wash our hands and cover our face when we sneeze. We can be aware and protective without being anxious and paralyzed. The purpose of online news feeds is to get us to click; the purpose of television “updates” is to get us to watch. Limit your exposure to information gathering. Pick a source or two and check it once a day. Remind yourself that even big numbers of something happening to people is still a very small percentages of the entire population.

Practice Self-Care

Anxiety provoking events can make us forget to do what’s important to take care of ourselves. Remember, anxiety prevention and reduction strategies work:

Get adequate sleep.

Exercise regularly.

Spend time outside as you can.

Talk to Friends about things that make you laugh.

Practice mindfulness.

Limit alcohol and drug consumption

Breathe!

Prioritizing these behaviors during a crisis can go a long way toward increasing your psychological well being and bolstering your immune system.

If You Need It Ask For Help

When our furnace quits running, our car breaks down or we break our collarbone, we seek help if we aren’t the expert at fixing the problem. If we are feeling overwhelmed in our relationships and coping, ask for help. Mental health professionals provide these services all the time. They are expert and can help. If you don’t know who to call, ask the schools’ counselor to assist you. If you are employed and have an Employee Assistance Program, use it. If you don’t have resources call the County Human Services Department. Those folks are all there to help.

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